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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY

JANUARY 24, 2003

1. This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for January 24, 2003. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICS, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

2. U.S. SITE SURVEYERS LEAVE TURKEY (Turkiye) The ten-day-long site surveys by U.S. military experts of nine bases and three ports in Turkey have ended, with a majority of the 150-person U.S. delegation having left Turkey. Preliminary results of the site surveys are that investments amounting to USD 250-300 million would be made at the inspected bases if the government were to give permission for their use. To make these investments, a U.S. military force of 4,500-5,000 people might need to come to Turkey.

3. ANTI-NUCLEAR ATTACK EXERCISE AT INCIRLIK (Turkiye) Prior to a possible U.S. operation against Iraq, exercises are being carried against possible nuclear attack at the Incirlik Air Base (Adana). During the two-day-long exercise, 5,000 U.S. soldiers and their families carry their gas masks around all the time and practice getting into shelters in the shortest time possible. Bolge reported that sirens heard from the base caused excitement on the part of local people.

4. "PEACE TRIP AGAINST WAR" (Cumhuriyet/Milli Gazete/Bolge) Prompted by the "Peace Trip Against War" slogan, a group of people, all members of the Human Rights Association (HRA), left Istanbul's Haydarpasa Train Station by train for the Incirlik Air Base (Adana) and the Mersin Port to protest a possible operation against Iraq. Ankara will be the first stop of the "peace volunteers," who are carrying "No To War" and "We Do Not Want War" banners. Dunya reported that the Adana War Opponents Platform staged a January 23 anti-war demonstration at Adana's Ugur Mumcu Square during which they shouted anti-war slogans and displayed "Close Incirlik Air Base" and "No To War" banners.

5. ANTI-WAR PROTESTS BY DISK CONTINUE (Evrensel) The Confederation of the Revolutionary Workers' Unions (DISK) staged demonstrations in Istanbul and Sirnak's Habur border gate (with Iraq) to protest a possible U.S.-led war in Iraq. DISK members said they wanted peace and brotherhood, not U.S. soldiers, to cross over the Iraqi border. They called on Members of Parliament to "vote for peace."

6. SANLIURFA SUPPORT FOR IRAQ SUMMIT IN ISTANBUL (Milli Gazete) A group of Siverrek (Sanliurfa) residents gathered to express support for the Iraq Summit to be held in Istanbul today (1/24) following a call by Turkey. The group voiced opposition to a possible U.S.-led war, saying "we did not elect the Members of Parliament forming the new government to enter into wars with which we have nothing to do and from which we will not benefit." The war opponents shouted "No To War" slogans by applauding and flying three doves: a black one for U.S. President Bush, a dotted one for Saddam Hussein, and a white one for Prime Minister (Abdullah) Gul.

7. MERSIN BUSINESS LEADER: WAR WILL NOT AFFECT MARINE TRADE (Turkiye) While the possibility of a U.S.-led operation against Iraq increases day by day, the

effects of such a war on Turkey and Mersin cause concerns, Cihad Lokmanoglu, President of the Mersin Chamber of Marine, noted. The Mersin Port had already lost all, over a period of ten years since the Gulf War. For that reason, Lokmanoglu said a new war would not substantially affect Mersin's marine trade.

18. POLICE STILL IN PURSUIT OF SUSPECTED ASSASSINS OF OKKAN

(Cumhuriyet/Evrensel) Two years have passed since the late-January 2001 assassination of former Diyarbakir Security Director Gaffar Okkan. Five security officers were also killed during the attack. Three of the suspected assassins (Hizbullah members) were killed; nine (13 according to Evrensel) others were arrested. Police are searching for five more gunmen.

19. PRO-OCALAN PROTESTS

(Evrensel) Demonstrations were held in Diyarbakir, Agri, Van, Hakkari, Siirt, and Mardin provinces to protest the eight-week-long isolation imposed on KADEK/PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan under the pretext of bad weather conditions and refusal of permission for him to meet with his attorneys. In Mardin, police assaulted protestors with armored-personnel carriers and truncheons, arresting nine of them. In Van, seven people were arrested and ordered to remain in custody for participation in anti-war and anti-isolation demonstrations.

110. BODY OF KILLED KADEK MEMBER HANDED OVER TO HIS FAMILY

(Evrensel) The body of KADEK/PKK member Kerim Koc, who was killed during a July 2001 clash with security forces in a rural area between Bingol and Diyarbakir, was handed over to his family following the completion of a DNA test.

111. DICLE U. SUFFERING FROM SHORTAGE OF ACADEMIC POSITIONS

(Milliyet) Professor Fikri Canoruc, Rector of Diyarbakir's Dicle University, criticized the Higher Education Council (YOK) for not having given his university any academic positions over the past two-and-half years. Upon the President's request, Canoruc was appointed the Rector although YOK had removed his name from the list despite having received most of the votes during the elections held to name the rector. Canoruc described the situation as "inconsistent with good intentions." Canoruc claimed the situation had caused the university to lose blood because around 100 teaching staff had not been given their academic titles although they had gained the right to become assistant, associate, and full professors. He added that, with his attitude, YOK President Professor Kemal Guruz wanted to disrupt professors' peace and tranquility.

112. DEHAP VAN OFFICE RAIDED, TEN ARRESTED IN BINGOL

(Turkiye) With permission from a local court, Van police launched an operation against Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) Office on January 23. During the two-hour-long operation, police searched 50 people in the DEHAP office and confiscated banned books, magazines, handbills and newspapers. Following the operation, the DEHAP Provincial Chairman, Serafettin Ozalp, as well as two HADEP provincial officials, were taken to the Security Directorate for interrogation. In addition, of the ten People's Democracy Party (HADEP) and DEHAP members arrested in Bingol, HADEP Bingol Youth Commission President Yilmaz Bulut was ordered to remain in custody, while a commission member was released. No information was given about the remaining eight arrestees.

113. MILITARY OFFICER ACCUSED OF INSULTING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

(Milliyet) Captain Hakan Kutlu, who is stationed at Sanliurfa's 20th Armored Brigade, together with a group of soldiers, reportedly came to the Social Security Institute (SSK) in an official vehicle and insulted SSK employees due to an argument between his wife and a male colleague of hers over the use of a computer. Kutlu is also accused of insulting the SSK Director, Ismail Yilmaztekin. Yilmaztekin said he and Kutlu had only exchanged words and the incident was being exaggerated. An official from

the Brigade claimed that Kutlu's wife had been verbally assaulted and threatened. "Kutlu, without having any dialogue with SSK personnel, met with the SSK Director. He (Kutlu) did not do anything negative," the official added.

14. TWENTY-EIGHT TARSUS (MERSIN) MUHKTARS' MISFEASANCE

(Turkiye/Bolge) Tarsus (Mersin) District Governor Necmi Kurt announced having launched investigations against 90 local muhktars (village headmen) and filed suit against 28 of them for embezzlement of government allocations.

15. OPEN PRISON VISITS DURING SACRIFICE HOLIDAY (Turkiye) Justice Minister Cemil Cicek sent a memorandum to chief prosecutors' offices for open prison visits during the nine-day Sacrifice Holiday beginning on February 9. Inmates and prisoners in 13 prisons across the country, including those in Adana, Gaziantep, and Mersin, will make use of open prison visits for a period of up to six days between February 9 and 14, thereby permitting prisoners and visiting family members to mix freely.

16. OVER 48 KILOS OF HEROIN SEIZED IN MERSIN (Turkiye/Milliyet/Cumhuriyet/Bolge) Acting on a tip, Mersin police seized 48.4 kilograms of heroin smuggled in through Van's Baskale township and destined for other countries. One suspect was arrested, while police are searching for two other suspects. In a separate operation in Adana, police raided the home of a drug courier and arrested a total of six people preparing for a cocaine party. Ninety-four grams of cocaine and 20 ecstasy pills were confiscated. Three arrestees were later ordered to remain in custody.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS

17. SUPPORT FOR ZEUGMA

(Milliyet) Bilal Necmettin Erdogan, son of AK Party leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan, asked for assistance from Culture Minister Huseyin Celik when Bilal's archaeology teacher, a consultant to Hewlett Packard Humanities Foundation (HPHF), requested him to do so. Minister Celik said Bilal had contacted him to help HPHF overcome bureaucratic difficulties regarding its sponsorship for archaeological excavations in the ancient city of Zeugma (Gaziantep) and establishing a museum. "Being a foreign foundation, HPHF faced difficulties with respect to the excavations. They (HPHF) will transfer USD 50 million for the excavations and we, as the Culture Ministry, want these excavations to continue," Celik added. Celik noted that he was planning to bring together Gaziantep's Sanko Holding Company, which has Zeugma's name rights, and the Gaziantep Chamber of Commerce, an HPHF. Abdulkadir Konukoglu, owner of Sanko, said the name "Zeugma" belongs to history. "We will not put any obstacles before them (i.e. HPHF) if their goals are to be beneficial to Zeugma," Konukoglu argued.

18. GAZIANTEP CARPET EXPORTS UP OVER 50% IN 2002 (Bolge) According to Yalcin Konukoglu, President of the Gaziantep Carpet Producers and Merchants Chamber, machine-made carpet exports from the province increased 52% in 2002, rising to USD 126.9 million from USD 83.5 million in 2001 despite the economic crisis. Major customers included such countries as the U.S., the U.K., Greece, and Germany.

19. EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS IN (SILOPI) SIRNAK (Radikal/Bolge) The Sirnak Governor's and the Silopi (Sirnak) district Governor's Offices spent TL 6 trillion (approx. USD 3.6 million) for educational projects in Silopi over the past three years. In the same period, the number of classrooms across the district increased nearly 100%, rising from 170 to 330. As a result of these projects, the number of students fell from 100 to 40 per classroom. The projects were financed mostly through donations and revenues from the district's Habur border gate. In addition, the

National Education Ministry donated computer laboratories in some schools; a local school came first at a nationwide website design competition.

120. VILLAGE RETURN PROJECT INCREASES HONEY PRODUCTION Dunya reported that the Village Return Project had led to an increase in honey production in Bitlis, which reportedly has potential to produce nearly 800 tons of honey.
HOLTZ